Universidad del Este,

Recinto de Caroline

**Absolution**

By

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald

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**I. Biography**

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald (Sept. 24, 1896 - December 21, 1940)

Born in St. Paul, Minnesota, son of Edward and Mary (Mollie), Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald grew up in a family of catholic beliefs. Grandson of an Irish immigrant, Fitzgerald attended the St. Paul Academy, where his first writing at age thirteen went public: a detective story in the school newspaper. In 1911-’13, Francis went to Newman School, and later on passed to Princeton, graduating in the class of 1917, where he wrote scripts and lyrics for Princeton Triangle Club. Later in that year, Fitzgerald joined the army and he was given the role of second lieutenant in the infantry. Later on wrote “*The Romantic Egoist*” with the idea that he was going to be murdered in war.

In 1918, Francis was assigned to Camp Sheridan, near Montgomery, Alabama, were there he fell in love with Zelda Sayre, the eighteen-year-old daughter of an Alabama Supreme Court Judge. For economic reasons, the relationship was short, and the engagement was broken; Fitzgerald returned to St. Paul in 1919, to rewrite his novel “*This Side of Paradise*”; later on, Francis became a writer of short stories for the mass-circulation magazines. Fitzgerald interrupted his work to focus on “money-making” popular fiction.

Thanks to the success of “*This Side of Paradise*”, the short-story writer flew to New York, and a week later, he married Zelda Sayre, where they lived like celebrities.

Fitzgerald wrote his second novel, “*The Beautiful and Damned*” in New York, and later on, they settled in St. Paul for the birth of his first child, Frances Scott (Scottie) Fitzgerald.

In spring of 1924, he wrote “*The Great Gatsby*” in France, while his marriage was almost torn apart by Zelda’s involvement with a French naval aviator, but the couple rapidly escaped France to avoid the distractions and to treat the spouse’s unconventional and eccentric behavior. Later on, for business reasons, the couple went back to France, where Zelda’s ballet career damaged her health and was being treated by psychiatrics.

After being famous, but not rich at all, the Fitzgeralds returned to America, in fall of 1931, and rented a house in Montgomery. In 1932, while Zelda Fitzgerald was a patient at John Hopkins, she wrote “*Save Me The Waltz*”, an autobiography novel.

The period of 1936-1937, it is known as “the crack up”, just as Francis wrote on an essay After having a bad life, full of illness, drunkenness and other things that didn’t go as planned, Francis Fitzgerald received in Hollywood, a six-month Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer screenwriting contract, which paid him $1,000 weekly; he went alone.

Painfully, Scott Fitzgerald died believing that he was a failure, not knowing that all his work was destined for America’s best and endured literary writings. The Great Gatsby, one of his works, has a place on the theme of aspiration in an American setting, in which this defines the classic American novel.

II. Synopsis

*Abosution*

by Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald

The short story begins with Father Schwartz receiving a visit by Rudolph Miller. The purpose of the visit was to reveal an awful sin which Rudolph had committed; One Saturday afternoon, Rudolph’s father, Carl Miller, a devout Catholic, orders him to go to confession, where in this one, the child tells the reverend a few minor sins, including that he never lies and, his belief of being too good to be the real son of his parents.

Rudolph’s daydreams that he is the stylish and confident Blatchford Sarnemington, and at the same time, feeling guilty of not confessing his real sins. The child decides to avoid communion by drinking water “accidentally” right before going to church. As he tries to do this, at 6 o’clock that Sunday morning, his father is awakened and surprises him just before he can get a zip. Seeing his son religious injunction, Carl abuses, verbally and physically his son, leaving frustration and an uncommon behavior by his father. As they entered the church, Rudolph’s father obligates him to g to confession, and as he goes and confronts the reverend, once again, he lies. At this moment, Rudolph’s action represents: “The pressure of his environment had driven him into the lonely secret road of adolescence”, as his confidence helps him to enter his daydreams and ambitions. As the child walks back to his father, Carl feels great relief and starts to regret his anger and actions and begins to recognize his little boy. Rudolph receives communion with fear and later, he believes he is damned.

After his dilemma, Rudolph decides to visit Father Schwartz and resolve his problem by confessing. At this moment, the story brings us back to the beginning, and lead to the part where the reverend, strangely, tells the boy about parties and amusement parks and how when people are all together in the best places, things go glimmering all the time. As Rudolph sits there, confused, Father Schwartz it’s just reveling to the boy his romantic and imaginative thoughts, alarming him not to become too closely to beautiful things. There, Father Schwartz collapses, and Rudolph, terrified, runs out of the house, with his sins acquitted in a strange way.

Analysis (Argumentative essay)

*Absolution*

After reading the short story “Absolution”, the deep analysis of its characteristics and literary theories wasn’t abundant. The way of writing by F. Scott Fitzgerald is a generic and obvious way, where his sentences are clear as water. Even though the author is an excellent one, the story picked randomly is not. This story represents his life in an indirect way, probably some memories, and tries to reveal how was the classic American life in those areas, and how much the writer lacked creativity at the moment of the writing. Therefore, the literary theories are few: phenomenology and structuralism.

In this story, Fitzgerald communicates in an excellent way the setting and plot. He describes his characters superficially but enough to understand their actions, creating the necessary mood (in this case, a warm but rough little-town-full-of-barns-like), complementing the necessities to establish the short story genre indirectly composed by some literary theories. As the story begins, the author informs the emotion and physical status of Father Schwartz, letting us know rapidly that something is wrong with him, but not knowing the cause. A few sentence after, the reverend receives the visit of a child, Rudolph Miller, but nothing else is told. Stop… Right here we can think, and imagine that the reverend suffers from a disease or maybe he is sad and furious thanks to his celibacy. Lets proceed… As the story passes, the cause of this visit starts to get clear. This child has committed sins and he needs the power of unleashing his spirit, in which in this case, the boy believes he is damned. Lets stop again… It is clear that in this story, the characters are strict Catholics, and the beliefs of supernatural powers are existent. Therefore, the reader, depending it cultural and religious background, can interpret in a way, how this characters need the spiritual and authorized protection after committing sins or revealing against God. This shows us the obsession and the over-disciplined way of living for the religion, giving us a probability of being correct in the description of this life-style even though, the reader may not be correct. Although the characteristics are not that concrete, or visible, the deep analysis lead to naming this strict religious life-style a feature of phenomenology, giving us the perception of their desire, letting the reader imagine their fear for God and compromising the receiver with their thoughts and emotions, providing us logic, composed by fear of defining, analyzing and experiencing it. But let us now go deeper to the real situation. Not knowing, F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote this story to calm his desire and passion of writing, or probably his boredom, creating paragraphs composed of generic words, to be the result of (as said before) lack of creativity. We cannot, and never know, the real cause of his writings, but we can analyze, assume and be willing to die for. We can observe letter by letter, how the writer gave love to them and how he desired to create entertainment for a public, providing his cultural background to come in and stay. In the times of the writing, the existence of structural writing was presence, creating limits in the concrete or tangible imagination of the writers and obligating readers to read and understand, but not to read, feel, understand and analyze. But what do all this unbreakable walls (in those times) represent? The laws, or strict ways of living under regulations, show the presence of structuralism in Fitzgerald’s writing. We can see, and feel it in how in was necessary and obligatory to confess, on how Carl’s verbal power was so colossal that it had the right to remain presence, and on how religion was life, and the way of behaving before, during, and after any direct contact with it was “spiritual and emotional threatening.”

Now, we can assure that the ending was a rare one. The information given in it was poor, and the way of executing its death was flavorless. The reader can agree, that the collapse of the reverend was unnecessary and meaningless; the sins of the child were never told to the key person, and the ending of this situation (liberating Rudolph’s sins) was confusing. We can say that every pen, runs out of ink; assuming its ink wasn’t meant to be what it desired.

References:

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3.) K. Siegel, *Introduction to Modern Literacy Theory* (2006) http://www.kristisiegel.com/theory.htm